

LEONARD & BINA ELLEN ART GALLERY ANNUAL REPORT

2008-2009

PLEASE NOTE THE GALLERY'S PROGRAMMING YEAR RUNS FROM SEPTEMBER TO JUNE

HIGHLIGHTS

The year 2008-2009 was particularly significant as one that saw a concerted effort from the university's administration to take stock of the importance of the LBEAG and plan for its future. The Gallery was the focus of its first-ever **strategic planning exercise** last September. Arranged and directed by the Office of Institutional Planning, it brought together eleven representatives of various groups that intersect with the Gallery's interests for a series of intense discussions over a period of two days. It resulted in a document made public in December 2008, that set the course for the Gallery's development for the next five years through a series of strategic directions as applied to six areas of the Gallery, which seek to protect and build on the gallery's achievements and increased profile. The Strategic Plan also clearly states the unique position the Gallery occupies in the University's own renewed commitment to academic excellence, student and visitor experience and community relations. One important shift that affected the gallery in the short term was a change in its reporting structure. The Gallery now reports to the Office of the Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies.

A new seasonal brochure was produced and distributed to our visitors and in Montreal in August and January. Individual invitations were eliminated as a cost saving measure and invitations to exhibitions and events are now sent electronically.

The Fred and Mary Kay Lowy Art Education Fund provided the support to further expand our public and educational programs: video and film screenings, book launches, artist and curator dialogues, talks by Concordia faculty, conferences by international figures notably the renowned art historian Rosalyn Deutsche from Barnard college in New York and Raqs Media Collective from New Delhi. Attendance to some events exceeded 100 visitors. The Gallery also pursued important collaborations with the Cinémathèque québécoise and the Goethe Institut for the realizations of some of these activities.

Two exhibitions had more than 1000 visitors: *Signals in the Dark: Art in the Shadow of War* (2270 vis.) a traveling show from the University of Toronto and *As Much as Possible in the Time and Space Allotted* (1696 vis.), a controversial collection-based exhibition produced by the Gallery. Both exhibitions illustrate the Gallery's diversified exhibition program that addresses both artmaking in the current socio-political context and the practices inherent to its existence in an institution.

Three publications were produced by the Gallery and are the fruit of efforts being made to realize significant books and catalogues that constitute tools of reference in the field: *Harun Farocki, One image doesn't take the place of the previous one* (224 p., 5 essays, illu) *Tim Clark, Reading the Limits: Works 1975-2003* (208 p., 3 essays, chronology, ill.) and *Silvia Kolbowski. Nothing and Everything* (88 p., 2 essays, interview, ill.).

Report on exhibitions, public programs, collection activity, publications, funding and facilities and equipment

EXHIBITIONS (7)

6 exhibitions produced by the LBEAG

1 hosted exhibition from the Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto

For more details consult the document *Bilan de la programmation*.

29 August to 11 October 2008: **Signals in the Dark: Art in the Shadow of War**, Curator: Seamus Kealy. Organized and circulated by the Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto. Catalogue.

23 October to 29 November: **Tim Clark. Reading the Limits. Works/ Œuvres 1973-2003**. Curator: David Tomas in with collaboration of Michèle Thériault and Eduardo Ralickas. Book.

11 December to 17 January 2009: **IGNITION (Steve Bates, Amélie Guérard-Simard, Mark Igloliorte, Miriam Sampaio, Margaret Meera Singh, Malena Szlam)**. Projects selected by Susannah Wesley.

29 January to 7 March 2009: **Silvia Kolbowski. Nothing and Everything**, Curator: Michèle Thériault. Catalogue.

11 March to 17 April: **As Much as Possible Given the Time and Space Allotted**. Curators: Rebecca Duclos and David K. Ross. Poster/Brochure.

5 May to 13 June: **Making it Work / Mettre en Œuvre (BGL, Crum, DGC-CGA, Knowles Eddy Knowles, Leisure Projects, PME-Art)** Curator: Susannah Wesley. **The Wrong Corpse / Faux Cadavre (Olivier Choinière, Julie Favreau et Marc Antoine K. Phaneuf)** Curator: Robin Simpson with the collaboration of Maryse Larivière.

*The two most popular exhibitions were **Signals in the Dark: Art in the Shadow of War** (2270 visitors) in September-October 2008 and **As much as possible given the time and space allotted** (1696) in March-April 2009.*

TOURING

The exhibition *Harun Farocki. "One Image doesn't replace the previous one"* was presented from November 2008 to February 2009 at the Agnes Etherington Art Center, Queen's University, Kingston and during the Images Festival in Toronto at Prefix, Institute of Contemporary Art from March to April 2009. Plans are to tour it the Carnegie-Mellon University Art Gallery next year.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

ORIENTATION

In September the Gallery participated in a series of events (Fine Arts bbq, presentation of Montréal artist run galleries and resources etc) and organized two events to welcome fine arts students at the gallery in which both the director and the public programs directors presented the Gallery its mandate, programs and explained its role in relation to other galleries at Concordia. Food and beverages were offered and attendance was very good.

PROGRAMS IN RELATION TO EXHIBITIONS

The gallery modified its student guide led **walk-in guided tours** for each of its exhibitions by offering it once a week during lunch hour. Groups from CEGEPS Concordia (mostly Fine Arts) Mc Gill and particularly UQAM reserved for visits around the *Signals of War* exhibition, *Tim Clark Reading the Limits* and *As much as possible ...*

Curators and artists made public presentations as part of their exhibitions. Other activities including panels, public conversations and exchanges, performances and public screenings. The renowned art historian **Rosalyn Deutsche** was invited to publicly converse with the artist Silvia Kolbowski in February and the internationally recognized **RAQS media collective** were invited to do a performance/conference in May. (consult the accompanying *Bilan programmation* document for detailed descriptions).

TOOLS OF GENERAL DISSEMINATION

The Gallery's continued to offer on its web site extensive documentation to orient the public for each exhibition under the *Ways of Thinking* section and in print form available for free at the Gallery. *Ways of thinking* is also produced in French as *Pistes de réflexion*.

TEACHING

The Director taught an *Independent Studies* course from January to April 2009 course addressing the issue of curatorial writing.

COLLECTION

The Curator of the collection continued to develop programs to further disseminate the collection. Conservation projects were initiated. Various policies in relation to the collection were refined or developed to ensure its proper management.

DISSEMINATION AND RESEARCH

- The exhibition *As much as possible given the time and space allotted* is the second exhibition (last year there was *This is Montreal!*) that represents an attempt on our part to position the collection within a contemporary discourse by inviting curators to develop projects that are experimental and innovative using the collection. The framework offered fosters a debate that is invigorating for the collection and reframes its history in a contemporary light.
- Projects with the following professors and their classes took place in the vault: Loren Lerner, Catherine MacKenzie, Susan Scott and Kristina Huneault.
- Nick Mitchell and Tobi Bruce (curator at the Art Gallery of Hamilton) who are working respectively on a documentary and on an exhibition on William Kurelek researched the gallery's Kurelek.
- Kent Monkman a First Nations artist invited to make a proposal for a project with the Gallery's collection spent a day exploring the collection.
- Laura Endicott and Kristina Huneault established lists of works in the Gallery's collection that are textile bases and are realized by women artist.
- A collection-based exhibition project is being developed by Prof. Sherry Simon and another one by Mélanie Rainville on the collecting practices of the Gallery's directors since the 1960s.

LOANS

- 12 works were internally loaned.
- 6 works were loaned to the President's private residence.
- 7 works were loaned to external institutions include a Claude Tousignant for the major retrospective that took place at the Musée d'art contemporain this winter.

CONSERVATION

- The entire lighting in the gallery's vault was changed this winter to meet museum standards. The UV blocking lights ensure a better preservation of the works in the vault.
- Photographs documenting activities at the Gallery over the past 40 years were placed in archival envelopes.
- Works on internal loan are being examined this summer by an intern from the program d'études muséologiques de l'UQAM/Université de Montréal.
- Proper labeling and ordering of works on paper was finalized.
- All faulty sprinkler heads in the vault are being replaced this summer.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

- Continuation of a three-year collection digitizing project. This project received funding from Museum Assistance Program of Heritage Canada.
- Continuation of an extensive project to obtain copyright for the works in the collection. This project is linked to the one above since without copyright it is not possible to reproduce in print or on our web site the works we own.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- A document entitled Collection Management (Gestion de la Collection) was put together by the curator. It brings together various policies, practices and reflections on the collection.
- An extensive Emergency Plan (Plan de prévention et d'intervention en cas de sinistre) was also written and is the first fully comprehensive plan for the gallery's collection and temporary loans of artwork for its exhibitions.

PUBLICATIONS

The Gallery produced two major books this year. One exhibition catalogue and one poster/ brochure. The Gallery has begun focusing on producing larger scale publications bringing together a number of essays addressing the issues and topics problematized in the exhibitions rather than single author catalogues. The aim is to produce significant reference tools that are unique on the market.

Harun Farocki. One Image doesn't take the place of the previous one. Edited by M. Thériault and co-produced with the Agnes Etherington Art Center. Queen's University, Kingston. 228 p. English and French. BOOK.(for details see Bilan document). The publication was launched at the Goethe Institut in Montreal.

Tim Clark Reading the Limits. Works / Oeuvres 1975-2003. Edited by D. Tomas and M. Thériault. 208 p. English and French. BOOK. (for details see Bilan document).

Silvia Kolbowski. Nothing and Everything / Rien et Tout. Edited by M. Thériault. 88p. English and French. CATALOGUE.(for details see Bilan document).

As much as possible given the time and space allotted. Illustrated BROCHURE / POSTER.

DISTRIBUTION

Sales of our publications fluctuates depending on the subject and authors. Our distributor is ABC Artbooks throughout Canada and abroad. This spring a number of galleries got together to discuss the possibility of creating a common front to foster better distribution practices from our distributor ABC and to create common distribution vehicles (eg. Common listings on a web site)

In the fall, the gallery participated for the first time in the New York Art Book Fair a very popular parallel book fair that focuses on art books and smaller publishers. We will be participating this year again. Repeated attendance is important.

CO PRODUCTION AND PARTNERSHIP

Co production is important on all fronts for both publications and exhibitions : to reduce production costs, to produce more extensive publications and to enhance one's distribution range. The Farocki publication was coproduced with the Agnes Etherington Art Center in Kingston. And other publications are in coproduction with Vox in Montreal.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

This year the gallery saw some financial contributions through its partnerships with other galleries and associations (AEAC Queen's University, Vox Centre de l'image contemporaine, Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art, Goethe Institut, the American consulate). The most significant were from AEAC (12,500 for publishing) and Prefix as an exhibiton fee (5,000) for touring the Farocki exhibition.

The gallery received its yearly grant from the Canada Council of 88,000 (an increase of 45% since 2007). It will be applying for funding for the next two years in the fall of 2009 (for 2010 to 2012).

Heritage Canada awarded us in 2008 a grant of 14,000 towards the three-year project of digitizing our collection. We receive each year a third of the amount.

A grant for 20,000 is pending from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

ENDOWMENTS

The gallery benefited fully in 2008-09 from its three programming endowments: *The Mary Kay and Frederick Lowy Art Education Fund* (approx. 12,000 a year); *The Samuel Schechter Programming Fund* (approx 7,500) and the Iris Westerberg Stern Exhibition Fund (approx 12,000).

These endowments however are expected to payout less in the next few years because of the financial crisis.

FUNDRAISING PROGRAM

The Gallery had come to an agreement (in 2008) with the JMBS and its Graduate program (MBA) to transform the Pateras Internship in a Sponsorship Raising endeavour, which was unsuccessful in attracting a candidate this year. The internship was reviewed and restructured and has the full support of Advancement, and we hope to have it running by the fall of 09.

STAFF

(5 full-time and 2 part-time)

The Gallery staff offers a very cohesive unit that is enthusiastically dedicated to the objectives of the Gallery.

Currently Cupeu is up for a new collective agreement.

Concerns are particularly focused on the position of *Exhibitions Coordinator* which has been a time sheet position for over two and half year.

PROMOTION

- In September 08 Gallery stopped sending individual invitations to its exhibitions in favor of electronic invitations.
- It produced instead a program for each season one in September and one in January that is also used to describe the gallery's general operations and orientation.
- It has increased its electronic announcements through signing up with an electronic distribution company that does its mailing.
- Increased participation in Orientation activities throughout the campus in Sept 08.

- Installation of a display vitrine outside the gallery to place posters, announcements of activities etc.
- Development of a plan for promotion of the gallery in the Webster Library starting this fall.
- Awarding of the first Ann Duncan Travel and Tuition Award to Zoe Yuristy.

MEDIA REVIEWS

All of the Gallery's exhibitions were positively covered in the *Le Devoir*, *Voir*, *Montreal Mirror*, *Ici* and *Hour in Montreal* and *The Globe & Mail* and *Now in Toronto*. Radio and television also covered some of our events (CBC radio, CHOQ FM (uqam), CIBL (community radio). Reviews appeared in specialized magazine namely *Ciel Variable*, *Esse* and *Art Papers* in the US.

STUDENTS at THE GALLERY

The gallery hired students under the Work Study program as guides (1), attendants (8) and researchers (2). This year students working at the gallery were from the Faculty of Fine Arts but also from other areas in the Social Sciences. An intern from UQAM's Programme en muséologie is working at the Gallery this summer.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

- Replacement of lighting in the gallery's vault
- Installation of a series of electrical outlets on the gallery's ceiling (work is taking place this summer).
- Installation of missing rails on the gallery's ceiling (work is taking place this summer).
- Replacement of recalled sprinkler heads in the vault (work is taking place this summer)